

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Promises, Promises: The Alliance for Progress

"Most Latin Americans have seen their neighbor to the north (the United States) growing richer; they have seen the elite elements in their own societies growing richer – but the man in the street or on the land in Latin America today still lives the hand-to-mouth existence of his great, great grandfather... They are less and less happy with situations in which, to cite one example, 40 percent of the land is owned by 1 percent of the people, and in which, typically, a very thin upper crust lives in grandeur while most others live in squalor."

U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright

Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
IV. Individual Development and Identity
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
VIII. Science, Technology, and Society
IX. Global Connections
X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives: The student will:

- Analyze President John F. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress
- Determine the effectiveness of the Alliance for Progress
- Examine past involvements of the United States in Latin American affairs

Time: 1 class period

Materials: Documents: **1961** *The Alliance for Progress*

Exercises: *Promises, Promises. . .The Alliance for Progress*

Access to video of JFK's Visit to Mexico:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUoRcrGhNRI>

Teacher background information:

- http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Alliance_for_Progress.aspx
- <http://apus-b.wikispaces.com/60s-political+cartoons>

Procedures:

Setting the Stage

The Alliance for Progress was designed to embody a conciliatory and humanitarian outreach to the nations of Latin America. President Kennedy based his program on a partnership of EQUAL footing with the people of Latin America—vastly different from the sometimes heavy-handed approach of previous years, which often treated Latin nations as protectorates of the United States.

Those programs were legion: numerous applications of the Monroe Doctrine; the Roosevelt Corollary; the Panama Canal “back story”; Dollar Diplomacy; the 1954 Guatemalan intervention; occupation by U.S. troops of the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Haiti; and U.S. involvement in the Mexican Revolution.

Shortly after Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress speech, CIA-backed rebels attempted to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. It was a difficult act to follow, but many Latin Americans greeted the Alliance initiative positively. The Catholic president and his wife, Jacqueline, were so admired that their pictures graced the walls of many Latin American homes—years after Kennedy’s death and the dismantling of the Alliance for Progress.

Whether the program achieved its lofty goals is a matter to explore.

1. Show the video of President John. F. Kennedy’s June 1962 visit to Mexico: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUoRcrGhNRI>
2. Have students describe their immediate reactions to JFK’s visit. Share responses. How does the visit compare/contrast with visits of more recent presidents to foreign countries?
3. Provide copies of President Kennedy’s speech, March 13, 1961, in which he proposes the Alliance for Progress.
4. Have students identify the **PROMISES** made by President Kennedy to Latin America.
5. Distribute copies of the exercise, *Promises, Promises...The Alliance for Progress*.
6. Have students list the promises made by the Alliance beneath the cartoon.
7. Have students brainstorm the reasons behind the proposal of the Alliance. It was a vehicle of foreign policy after all.
8. Consult the “Teacher Background Information,” if necessary.
9. Have students suggest how the cartoon answers the question, “Promises Kept?”

10. Use the “Teacher Background Information” to tie together all aspects of the exercise.

11. Provide students with the Fulbright quote from the beginning of this lesson. Apply it to the Alliance for Progress.

- a.** Would Fulbright have been positive about the Alliance for Progress?
- b.** Would he have made changes to the program?
- c.** Was the Alliance doomed from the beginning?
- d.** What aspects of government might make it difficult to reach ALL of the people?
- e.** Speculate as to whether the Alliance would have been more successful if President Kennedy had completed one or two terms as president. ■